

VZCZCXRO3088  
PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK  
DE RUEHGB #1349 1221316  
ZNY SSSSS ZZH  
P 011316Z MAY 08  
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7125  
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

S E C R E T BAGHDAD 001349

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/26/2018  
TAGS: [PINS](#) [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [IR](#)  
SUBJECT: PRT MAYSAN: MAYSAN ATMOSPHERICS

REF: BAGHDAD 1198

Classified By: PRT Team Leader Darrell Jenks for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (U) This is a PRT Maysan reporting cable.

¶2. (S) Summary: A Maysani employee reported to the PRT that Maysanis do not support Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM) and hope the Iraqi government will conduct military operations in Maysan to bring stability to the province. Maysanis expressed similar views to PRT engineers who recently traveled to the north of the governorate. The degree to which Maysanis would actually welcome armed intervention is difficult to gauge, but past history suggests that locals would react negatively to any enduring foreign military presence. Tribal leaders also told the engineers that the Governor was in negotiations with the GOI and hoped to forestall any military operations by cooperating with the Iraqi Army (IA) and local sheikhs to arrest suspects. End Summary.

¶3. (S) On 20 April, a PRT employee located in Maysan reported that on the nights of the 19th and 20th of April, Sadrists sung songs (howsat) and fired into the air in the streets of al-'Amara to show that they were ready to face their enemies. IEDs were also reported to be planted along some roads inside the city. In general, he said that security in Maysan is such that when a person goes out in the morning, he will not be sure that he will return home at night. Our source claimed that people were happy about the government's Basra initiative. He added that Maysanis hope the government and Iraqi Army will come into Maysan to enforce security and law, restoring peace and enabling children to go to school. In preparation for the rumored operation, the residents of al-'Amara were stocking up on water and food.

¶4. (S) On 22 April 2008, the same employee reported that many people were afraid when Muqtada as-Sadr announced that he will make open war against the government. Our source claimed that the people approved of Iraqi Foreign Minister Zubary's statement that the government will not allow as-Sadr to make open war and the government will face him strongly. The employee added that Maysan is now being seen as a safe haven for Jaysh al-Mehdi (JAM) leadership and they are flocking to Maysan from other provinces. Facilities have been made available to them by Maysan as-Sadr office. This correlates with separate reporting indicating that elements of JAM from various parts of Iraq intended to move into al-'Amara.

¶5. (S) From April 20-22 PRT engineers traveled to the Qada'a of 'Ali al Gharbi and the sub-towns of at-Teeb (border) and surrounding villages in northern Maysan to conduct assessments. In their encounters with the villagers and tribal leadership in 'Ali al-Gharbi, the employees reported that the people were very excited about the events in Basra and hoped similar operations would be conducted in Maysan. The Maysanis also said security is better in the northern

half of the province, explaining that travel in the south is very unsafe and people refuse to travel after sunset. Finally, the tribal leadership mentioned that the Governor was engaged in discussions over a list of criminals to be apprehended with the Iraqi Army and tribal shaykhs. The Governor wants to reach an agreement to stave off an Iraqi Army operation in Maysan. This correlates with a previous statement made by PM Maliki (reftel).

¶6. (S) Comment: Our inability to travel to Maysan makes it difficult to assess the degree to which most Maysan inhabitants would really welcome armed intervention. However, given the British experience in 2003 and 2004, we are fairly sure that the Maysanis would resent any long-term foreign presence in the province. End comment.  
BUTENIS